

# Missouri's Cancer Inquiry Program

**Mission:** Provide the most complete answers to questions about cancer based on the most current research and data available.



## What can I expect if I begin a cancer inquiry?

The cancer inquiry process begins when you contact the Cancer Inquiry Program with concerns about people in a community who have cancer.

1. Program staff will talk to you about your concerns and provide data about your county for you to review.
2. You may be asked to distribute forms to collect names of people who have cancer and the types of cancer in your area.

These names will be compared to names in the Missouri Cancer Registry, a database of cancer cases reported by Missouri hospitals since 1985. The names also are compared with the Missouri database of death certificates.

3. The number of new cancer cases and deaths for the area identified will be compared with regional and state rates.

4. If needed, program staff will gather information about potential environmental hazards in the area from the:

- ◆ Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of Environmental Health and Communicable Disease Prevention
- ◆ Missouri Department of Natural Resources
- ◆ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- ◆ U.S. Public Health Service, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry



## Who makes the final decision?

1. A Cancer Inquiry Committee, made up of health and environmental specialists, will determine what action is needed.
2. The committee will evaluate all the information and may:
  - ◆ Request more information.
  - ◆ Close the inquiry because no cancer cluster was identified.
  - ◆ Close the inquiry, but reconsider the matter if new information is provided.
  - ◆ Expand the inquiry when the cancer can be linked to a potential common exposure and the size of the population is large enough that an expanded study may provide clear answers.
  - ◆ Assist communities to organize a public meeting on cancer and its risk factors.
  - ◆ Provide a report of the findings after a decision is made.

## **Three out of four Missouri families are affected by cancer.**

Unfortunately, cancer is a common disease. One in three women and one in two men will have some type of cancer during their lifetime.

At times it might seem that an unusually large number of people in your community have cancer. Sometimes, people want to blame something in the environment - a local factory, pesticides or contaminated drinking water.

However, most types of cancer are not caused by the environment or pollution. They are related to lifestyle factors and choices.

If you are concerned that an excessive number of people in your community have cancer, the Missouri Cancer Inquiry Program can address those concerns.



## **The risks of cancer may be reduced and your survival increased by the following:**

- ◆ **Avoid tobacco products and second-hand smoke.**
- ◆ **Eat a nutritious and balanced diet.**
- ◆ **Get 30 minutes of physical activity every day.**
- ◆ **Obtain cancer screenings as recommended.**
- ◆ **Comply with recommended treatment or seek help with compliance.**

**[www.dhss.mo.gov/  
CancerInquiry](http://www.dhss.mo.gov/CancerInquiry)**

Alternate forms of this publication for persons with disabilities may be obtained by contacting the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services at 573-522-2840. Hearing impaired citizens telephone 1-800-735-2966.

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## ***Are you concerned about cancer in your community?***



## **MISSOURI'S CANCER INQUIRY PROGRAM**

**Call 573-522-2840**

**Missouri  
Department of Health  
and Senior Services**